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# A Brief History of the North American Gymnastic Union

(Nordamerikanischer Turnverband)



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With the Compliments  
of the  
National Executive Committee  
of the  
North American Gymnastic Union

Indianapolis, Indiana



# A Brief History of the North American Gymnastic Union

By Henry Metzner

Translated from the German by  
Theo. Stempf, Jr.

In Commemoration of the One Hundredth  
Anniversary of the Opening of the First  
Gymnastic Field in Germany by  
Friedrich Ludwig Jahn



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## FOREWORD

IT HAS been justly said that the North American Gymnastic Union, although it has been in existence for over sixty years and has always taken an active interest in public affairs, as a national organization has kept its light under a bushel. The reason for this may chiefly be found in the fact that the official language of the Turners is the German language, the furtherance of which has always been one of their aims.

The Executive Committee of the Gymnastic Union is of the opinion that the history of the *Turnerbund* is of sufficient interest to warrant its publication in book form. The history was written by Henry Metzner of North Branch, New Jersey, who has been identified for over half a century with the Turner organization. The translation from the German was made by Theo. Stempfel, Jr., of Indianapolis. The article on the influence of the Turners on Gymnastics in public schools was contributed by Wm. A. Stecher, director of physical training in the public schools of Philadelphia.

It seems appropriate to publish the book at this time as the year 1911 marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the opening of the first gymnastic field in Berlin. This may well be regarded as the real beginning of the playground movement which in late years has also taken root in this country.


THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
NORTH AMERICAN GYMNASTIC UNION

Indianapolis, Indiana, June, 1911.

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# FRIEDRICH LUDWIG JAHN

N THE spring of the year 1811, on the Hasenheide, near Berlin, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn established the first *Turnplatz*,\* an open field for the practice of physical training. This incident has acquired special significance, for it marked the introduction of that type of physical training, based upon Jahn's ideals, which has met with so much success and has found so many loyal followers at the present time. It is indeed appropriate that the centennial anniversary of such an important event in the history of physical education should be elaborately celebrated, not only abroad, but also in the United States.

Jahn was prompted to undertake the practical application of his theories for immediate reasons. Napoleon, the political oppressor, had reduced Germany to a state of servile humiliation. By encouraging bodily exercise and fostering patriotic ideals in his students, Jahn hoped to supply his country with a body of young men inspired with patriotism and a love for freedom who, at the call to arms, would willingly sacrifice their lives to liberate Germany from the tyranny of a foreign state.

This was perhaps the period of the deepest humiliation in the history of Germany. After the disastrous battle of Jena, October 14, 1806, it was not alone the iron rule of the seemingly unconquerable French dictator which contributed toward the national gloom. Even the most inspired patriots among the people,

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\*A term coined by Jahn. The verb *turnen* (to perform gymnastic exercises) is of foreign origin, although Jahn considered it a genuine German word. *Turner*=gymnast; *Turnerbund*=gymnastic union; *Turnfest*=gymnastic festival; *Turnverein*, or *Turngemeinde*=gymnastic society.

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upon taking cognizance of the fact that the German princes themselves were in the service of Napoleon, and were waging war against their fellow-countrymen in order to earn the clemency of the French emperor and to gain a shred of land from some one of the tattered German kingdoms as a reward for their treachery, began to despair of the ultimate freedom of Germany.

The youthful enthusiasts who had been prepared by Jahn for a war of liberation, fulfilled in a glorious fashion the hopes and the confidence that had been placed in them. When the call to arms resounded, Jahn and his Turners joined the ranks of the champions of liberty with glad hearts brimming with enthusiasm, and their example aided in no small way in kindling the glowing ember of patriotism. The baptism of fire administered to German gymnastics in the sad days of the Napoleonic regime has bequeathed to the Turners a sacred heritage, the love for freedom, which has been faithfully revered in whatever locality Turning has found a home.

However, on the occasion of the present writing, the political situation in Germany at the time of Napoleonism, is of importance only in so far as it helps to point out the motive which inspired Jahn, and gave an importance to his efforts which, under normal conditions, might not have brought his work into immediate popularity with those members of the community who were dissatisfied with the dandified militarism of the regular army, and ached under the yoke of the foreign tyrant.

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Friedrich Ludwig Jahn was born August 11, 1778, in the small village of Lanz, in the province of Brandenburg, Prussia. His mother gave him his first lessons in

reading and writing, and his father, the minister of the village, instructed him in the elementary branches of education. The boy was thus enabled to lead a free, untrammelled life, and to disport himself in the practice of various bodily exercises, which enabled him to attain a certain mastery in this field at a very early age.

At the age of thirteen he was sent to the gymnasium at Salzwedel, and in 1794 he moved to Berlin, where he continued his studies in the *Gymnasium Zum Grauen Kloster*. It is significant to note that it was difficult for a boy of his temperament to submit to the strict discipline of either school. Several years later, after secretly leaving Berlin, he went to Halle in order to study theology, although he felt no urgent call in this direction.

As a student Jahn pursued an unfettered life. The universal temptation to go roaming out into the world, happily termed *Wanderlust*, manifesting itself to an acute degree in his veins, he wandered about Germany with an observing eye, taking note of the country and its people, of their customs and manners, and of the various folk dialects and peculiarities. All this fostered a patriotic idealism in him which found expression in various pamphlets he issued at this period.

When the war between Prussia and France was renewed in 1806, Jahn hastened to join the army, but before he could realize his purpose, his Prussian compatriots had suffered a decisive defeat at the battle of Jena. This unhappy event had a crushing effect on the spirit of Jahn, whose hair turned gray over night in mental anguish over the terrible calamity. However, his optimism and faith in the ultimate success of Prussian arms reasserted itself in this period of gloom, for he

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wrote with confidence of the time when all his hopes for a new, free and unified Germany would be realized.

In 1810 we find him teaching at the school which he himself had attended in his youth, the *Gymnasium Zum Grauen Kloster*, and later, in the same year, at the *Plamann* Institute. His most important book, "*Deutsches Volksthum*" (German Nationality), appeared at this time, and his plea for the unity of Germany was universally commented upon and heartily applauded. Furthermore, this year marks the beginning of his first practical attempts to introduce gymnastic exercises among his students, to infuse them with a patriotic love for freedom, to make them capable of bearing arms for their oppressed country, and to prepare them for the imminent war of liberation.

As noted above, the first public *Turnplatz* was opened by Jahn in the spring of the year 1811. The boys and young men of Berlin, five hundred strong, responded to his call and followed him to the Hasenheide, where they indulged in gymnastic exercises under his direction. In spite of the freedom which he accorded to his scholars, Jahn was a stern disciplinarian in many respects, and compelled them to maintain good order and to observe good manners.

On November 14th of that year, Jahn, Friesen and other men of like sympathies founded the *Deutschen Bund*, an organization with the purpose of defying the domination of their country by an alien power. The personnel of its membership was to be drawn from the German universities. This Bund inspired the founding of the *Deutsche Burschenhaft*, an association of students

banded together for patriotic motives, which played such a prominent part in the political crisis of later years.

Jahn and his Turners were among the first to respond to the call to arms issued by King William III of Prussia, on March 17, 1813, and in the campaign which followed they demonstrated their fitness as soldiers as members of the *Landwehr*, a voluntary military organization which they helped to establish. Owing to sickness, Jahn was forced to withdraw from this body before the close of the campaign, but as a reward for his services the government bestowed upon him an honorary salary of 500 *Taler*, which was later increased to 800 *Taler*.

In August of the year 1814 he was married to Helene Kollhof. Although he did not take part in the war against France in 1815, he was called to Paris upon the recapture of that city by the allied forces. In the following year his second great book, "*Deutsche Turnkunst*" (German Gymnastics), appeared in print. In the winter following the publication of this book Jahn mounted the public platform, where he gave courageous expression to the dissatisfaction that was felt on all sides because the government did not redeem the promise of a constitution given to the people previous to the resumption of the successful campaign against Napoleon.

His uncompromising attitude on this point, although it won him many admirers among the people, did not gain him the good will of the government. This, together with the demonstrations of the *Burschenschaften*, which were attributed to his influence, ultimately led to the closing of his *Turnplatz*, a procedure to which similar organizations were subjected all over Germany.

In 1819 the dramatist and literary critic, Kotzebue, met

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his death at the hand of Karl Sand, a fanatic student and member of the Jena *Burschenschaft*. As Kotzebue was in the employ of the Russian Czar, and bitterly opposed to the student organizations, his death was regarded as the result of an organized conspiracy among these societies. Therefore Jahn and his Turners were suspected of being accomplices in the assassination. Among the prohibitory regulations issued by the government as the result of this assassination was one which limited Turning in an organized manner to a prohibitive degree.

In July of the year 1819 Jahn was placed under arrest on the charge of high treason, and the trial was delayed for five years until January 13, 1824, when he was sentenced to two years' confinement in a fortress because of the disrespectful and derogatory remarks which he supposedly had made in alluding to the administration of the state. Jahn immediately drew up his self-defense in pamphlet form, upon which his sentence was revoked, and he was given his liberty. In the years which followed, until 1840, when Friedrich Wilhelm IV mounted the Prussian throne, Jahn was under the continuous suspicion of political demagogy, and though he lead a quiet, retired life, devoting himself to literary pursuits in his field, he was forced to seek out many new residences because of the pitiless political espionage and persecution to which he was subjected.

In August of the year 1838 his house was destroyed by fire and his rich library as well as his numerous manuscripts were consumed by the flames. The Turners of Germany instituted a popular subscription and this enabled him to erect a new home upon his own prop-



erty. With the inauguration of the new king, Jahn was freed entirely of the strict surveillance on the part of the police, and subsequently the Iron Cross was bestowed upon him, a delayed appreciation of his valorous conduct in battle. The interdict on Turning was removed in 1842, and immediately numerous Turning societies were organized in various parts of Germany whose members found a mutual bond in their patriotic sentiments.

When the dissatisfaction caused by the misrule, and the utter indifference of the government to the popular demand for a constitution, which had been often promised, infused the people with the spirit of the French Revolution and culminated in the revolutionary outbreaks of the year 1848, Jahn was again thrust into public life as an elected representative to the National German Parliament at Frankfort on the Main. But Jahn, the leader of the year 1811, was not emancipated to the level of this new aggressive spirit and failed to redeem the faith that was placed in him by his champions. The ambitions of the revolutionists were beyond his vision, and his period of enlightened leadership had become a record of the past. And so, at the second Turnfestival in Hanau, in July of 1848, he found himself estranged from his own Turners who did not sympathize with his attitude in the Parliament. And Jahn, embittered and misunderstood, withdrew himself to Freiburg, where he died October 15, 1852.

The Jahn of the year '48 has been forgotten; his memory has been dimmed in the light of *Turnvater* Jahn, the glowing patriot who revived the art of German gymnastics, and was influential as was no other single man in enkindling the youth of his country for the war

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of liberation. As such, and as the author of "Deutsches Volkstum," "Deutsche Turnkunst," and various other kindling articles and pamphlets aiming at the cultivation of a healthy body and inaugurating the principle of German unity, he is honored today.

His greatest contribution to society no doubt, is his service in the field of physical training, which has found so many exponents and followers and has spread its influence over alien lands. The centennial anniversary of the first *Turnplatz* seeks to give due tribute to the memory of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn as pioneer in the field of physical training and to accord him recognition for his gift to humanity.

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### THREE PIONEERS OF GERMAN-AMERICAN GYMNASTICS

The centennial celebration of the opening of the first *Turnplatz* has a vital significance for this country. It is no exaggeration to assert that the greater portion of all physical training systems practiced in the public schools of the present day, at the universities and colleges, in the clubs and the schools devoted solely to that end are based on the theories of German gymnastics. That this is so is due to the pioneer work of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn and of his disciples, Carl Beck, Carl Follen and Francis Lieber, who fled to this country during the political turmoil in Germany which followed the overthrow of the foreign tyrant, Napoleon.

Upon rehearsing a history of German-American gymnastics, no matter how brief and concise, three eminent German scholars and disciples of Jahn, Carl

Beck, Carl Follen and Francis Lieber, will always remain pre-eminent and worthy of special mention. In order to evade the persistent espionage and the political persecution to which they were exposed as prominent members of the *Burschenschaft*, these men fled the confines of their fatherland and crossed the Atlantic to the land of liberty, where they were the first to introduce Jahn's system of physical training, and to incorporate it in the liberal education of the colleges and universities.

It was not their immediate or even their ultimate ambition to establish gymnastic societies on American soil, such as existed in Germany at that time, but they were pioneers in the sense that they established gymnasiums, based on German models, equipped with German apparatus, and thus they cleared the way for the attempt to train the body as well as the mind in the American institutions of learning. Their success was not lasting, for when they were no longer personally identified with this movement, the practice of gymnastics was gradually discontinued or directed into other channels. But this does not lessen the service of Beck, Follen and Lieber, for they remain the pioneers of German-American gymnastics.

Carl Beck was born August 19, 1798, in Heidelberg, Germany. When in 1810 the family moved to Berlin, where Beck's step-father occupied the chair of theology, young Beck, who attended the gymnasium, distinguished himself as an unusually active Turner on the Hasenheide and gained the immediate friendship of Jahn. He was too young to take service in the campaigns against Napoleon, but later in life, as a student and member of

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the *Burschenschaft*, he was active in the struggle for personal freedom and national independence.

Beck completed his studies at the University of Heidelberg in 1822; was ordained as Lutheran minister and received the degree of doctor of philosophy from the University of Tuebingen. His step-father, De Wette, had sometime previously been banished to Switzerland, because he had written a letter to the mother of Sand, the assassin of Kotzebue, and Beck moved to that country where he became professor of literature and Latin at the *Paedagogium* in Basel. With Carl Follen he had participated actively as a Turner and member of the *Burschenschaft* in the movement which aimed at the liberation of Germany and the emancipation of its people from a government under the tyrannical guidance of the omnipotent Metternich, the Austrian minister.

Carl Follen, born in Giessen, September 3, 1795, was the second oldest of three brothers. The three enlisted in the army, and at the close of the campaign against the French Emperor, together with a number of like-minded friends, they were charged with demagoguery and became the victims of political persecution. Carl Follen wrote a defense of the *Burschenschaft*, published a number of highly poetic songs on Turning and Liberty, and fearlessly maintained the cause of the Hessian people against their government. He managed to escape arrest by his flight to Paris and from there to Basel, where he accepted a position as teacher.

When the Prussian government could not prevail upon Switzerland to deliver Beck and Follen into its hands, and threatened war in order to attain this object, the two political refugees were finally forced to look for

another place of safety. America was the promised land, and after obtaining letters of recommendation from General Lafayette in Paris, they took passage for their new home, and arrived in New York on Christmas day, 1824.

The personal appearance of Beck inspired confidence and this, together with the letters of recommendation, soon enabled him to obtain a position that was well suited to his tastes and talents. With J. G. Cogswell, an eminent scholar, and George Bancroft, the famous historian, he established a boy's school at the summit of Round Hill, in Northampton, Massachusetts. During his five years of activity at this institution, he gained recognition as a teacher, and established the first gymnasium in America based on Jahn's models. During this period he also translated into English Jahn's book, "*Deutsche Turnkunst*," and published it in Northampton.

Carl Follen was active as a teacher in the Round Hill school until 1826, when he was called to Harvard as professor of church history, and later of German language and literature. At this university, Follen introduced German gymnastics, and established the second gymnasium in this country, based on the principles of Jahn.

The influence of the Round Hill school spread still further, and in September of the year 1826, Yale granted the sum of \$300 for the endowment of a gymnastic field and for the purchase of gymnastic apparatus to be placed on the college campus. At the same time, the brothers Devight opened the "*New Haven Gymnasium*," in which gymnastic exercises were given a prominent part. In 1828 a number of Amherst students established

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a *Turnplatz* which was fairly well equipped with gymnastic apparatus of German invention. All these gymnasiums can be attributed to the example of Beck and Follen.

Owing to the efforts of Dr. John Collins Warren, a follower and promoter of the system of physical training introduced by Beck and Follen, the Tremont gymnasium was established. Dr. Warren, who had become acquainted with Jahn's activity in Germany, through his friendly intercourse with these two disciples, had conceived the idea of obtaining the services of Jahn himself to conduct this gymnasium, but lack of funds prevented him from carrying this idea beyond its mere conception. Dr. Francis Lieber, the third of the German pioneers in the field of physical training, was obtained to fill this vacancy.

In spite of the many successes with which Beck, Follen and Lieber met in the department of gymnastics soon after they established themselves on American soil, their influence was not vital enough to be enduring. For Turning, in the sense that Jahn conceived it, there existed neither the right comprehension nor the favorable conditions under which it had flourished in Germany. "The introduction of gymnastic exercises throughout the country," writes Dr. Warren, "promised for a time to be the beginning of a new epoch of education. As long as they charmed by their novelty these exercises were pursued with zest, but since their value and importance was not generally understood, they were gradually neglected, and finally forgotten. However, the results which these institutions accomplished excelled, in my opinion, the most extravagant expectations."

After some years Beck, Follen and Lieber found them-

selves forced to drop the teaching of gymnastics. Their eminent erudition in other branches of knowledge directed their activities into different channels, where they gained influence, distinction and a reputation far beyond the confines of their second home.

In 1827 Dr. Beck married Miss Louise A. Henshaw. In 1830 he erected his own school in Phillipstown on the Hudson, and from 1832 until 1850 he was active at the University of Harvard. Upon resigning his professorship at Harvard he devoted himself eagerly to his duties as a citizen and to his private studies. He was elected twice to the state legislature, and was a member of several literary societies. He visited Germany three times, partly in order to recuperate and partly for literary research. At the outbreak of the civil war he enlisted as a private in a company of Cambridge volunteers, but was finally rejected on account of his advanced age which, however, did not prevent him from fitting out hundreds of soldiers with his own means and sending them into the field of battle. He died March 19, 1866.

Carl Follen became a member of the Harvard faculty in 1831, where he held the chair of German language and literature for five years. At the same time he gave lectures in New York and Boston on the German poets, which were attended with great success. It was through his influence that the German language and literature took such deep root in the intellectual circles of New England at that time. In 1833 he became a member of the anti-slavery society, and thus he forfeited his re-appointment to Harvard university.

His "Address to the American People," which he had written at the request of the anti-slavery society, appeared

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in 1836, and in this he laid down the principles upon which this society maintained its attitude toward the question of the day. The pamphlet made a deep impression, but called forth vehement opposition on the part of the pro-slavery press, which reproached him for hurling firebrands into the social and political life of his new fatherland. Follen replied energetically, and asserted his right to maintain those very principles in his new home which he had defended in his native land and which had resulted in his flight from political persecution.

Follen was ordained as Unitarian minister and was the head of a congregation in New York in this capacity until 1838, when he accepted a call to East Lexington. A great portion of his time was devoted to his literary and political lectures and to other literary pursuits. The translation of his revolutionary songs written during the storm and stress period of Germany is worthy of special notice.

In the winter of the year 1840, he accepted an invitation to lecture on German literature before the New York Mercantile Library. He was forced to discontinue these lectures in order to attend the dedication of the newly built church at Lexington. On February 13, 1840, he embarked on the steamboat Lexington, which was to convey him home. That night the ship caught fire, and, with the exception of two sailors, everyone on board was either drowned or burned to death.

The tragic death of Follen called forth general sympathy, and even his bitterest opponents on the question of slavery shared the general sorrow which followed his unfortunate death.



Francis Lieber, the third of the Turner pioneers, was born in Berlin, March 18, 1800. He too felt the tyranny of alien domination and caught the enthusiasm which inspired the people to revolt. At a very impressionable period of his life he became one of the devoted followers of Jahn. When the call to arms resounded throughout the land in March of the year 1815, he and his brother were among the first of the many young men who enlisted to fight against Napoleon upon his return from Elba. At the victorious close of this memorable campaign, during which he was severely wounded several times, he eagerly resumed his studies.

His intimacy with Jahn and his love for freedom resulted in political persecution, and finally in arrest. Since attendance at a Prussian university was denied him, he completed his studies at Jena. As it was impossible for a man of his convictions to entertain any hope of ever being employed in the service of the state, he allied himself with a number of young men in Dresden who had organized a society in order to take part in the Grecian struggle for independence against the Turks.

Bitter disappointment followed upon his previous enthusiasm, for during his three months stay in Greece he came to respect the Turks more than the Grecians, whom he had come to liberate, and with a number of other disillusioned young men left Greece. Without means and without passports he arrived in Rome, where he applied for help at the Prussian ministry, which at that time was headed by the famous historian, Niebuhr, who took an immediate interest in young Lieber and entrusted him with the education of his youngest son.

Niebuhr interceded with King Friedrich Wilhelm III

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in behalf of the young man. Under pledge of immunity from the Prussian monarch, Lieber returned to Berlin after he had spent a year in Rome. Even the promises of kings sometimes prove elusive pledges to build upon, for immediately upon his arrival in Berlin, Lieber was arrested and taken to the fortress Koenigsberg. Although Niebuhr was successful in gaining him his freedom, Lieber did not feel safe in Germany and sailed for London, and eventually from there for America, where he arrived in the year 1827.

He first located at Tremont, where he interested himself in gymnastics. Later he founded a swimming school in Boston, a new departure in the educational field, and John Quincy Adams, President of the United States, paid a personal visit to this novel establishment. Lieber's thorough and general knowledge gained for him the esteem and respect of all educational and political circles, as well as the friendship of many eminent scholars, authors and statesmen. During the civil war he spent a large portion of his time in Washington, where he became an intimate advisor of the administration on questions of military and international law.

He acquired a reputation as an authority on the problems of the day and on all questions touching upon political science. His first great work appeared in 1837, under the title "Manual of Political Ethics." It was followed by "Legal and Political Hermeneutics" (1839), and "Civil Liberty and Self-Government" (1853). Of these three, which are considered his greatest works, the last-named has become the most popular. His last literary work, "The Origin of the Constitution of the United States," remained unfinished at the time of his death, October 2, 1872.

The motto above the door of the study of Francis Lieber read:

"Patria Cara,  
Carior Libertas,  
Veritas Carissima."

It was also the motto of his life, for it was the motive in all of his activities. No matter how dear his native land, liberty was more precious to Francis Lieber, and truth he prized as the highest ideal of all.

Those who are in any way identified with or interested in German-American gymnastics of the present day, have good reason to be proud of its three pioneers, Beck, Follen and Lieber. In their love for the adopted fatherland they dedicated to it the full sum of their rich knowledge, and spared no energy in the cause of patriotism.



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NORTH AMERICAN GYMNASTIC UNION

German-American gymnastics, as embodied in the North American Gymnastic Union, date back to the middle of the last century, the history of the Union embracing over sixty years of tireless activity. Since the days of its beginning, when the ambitious and inspired young men, imbued with the spirit of progress and freedom, transplanted the ideals of Jahn to American soil, this organization has cleared its own path and, in spite of numerous internal and external conflicts, has never lost sight of the ultimate goal.

The impetuosity of the early days has made way for the thoughtful deliberation of later years, to which the *Turnerbund* owes its flourishing Normal College, its many successful turning schools, its influence upon the public school system throughout the land, as well as the spirit of unity and brotherhood, which inspires the individual members.

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TURNERBUND

The first gymnastic societies in the United States were organized toward the close of the year 1848. Until the middle of the fifties all of these societies owed their organization and their flourishing state to the many German immigrants, who came to this country when the

revolutionary movement in Germany in 1848-1849 was suppressed. For all those who had been friendly to the cause of the people were forced to flee from their native land in order to escape persecution and the pressure of the reaction. Among the thousands of political refugees that fled to American soil, there were many who had been members of a *Turnverein*, who prized the cause of turning, and who were eager to establish it in their new home.

Although there was no legislative barrier to the founding of these organizations, the influence of the Know-Nothing party, narrow minded, puritanical and opposed to everything foreign, was used against these societies. These men who had sacrificed all for their ideals, and had come to this country as political refugees, were not received with open arms, but were regarded by many with mistrust and suspicion. It was not easy for them to overcome these barriers and to establish gymnastic societies.

The oldest *Turnverein* in the United States which flourishes to the present day, is the *Cincinnati Turngemeinde*, founded November 21, 1848, at the instigation of Friedrich Hecker. The *New York Turngemeinde* was also organized in 1848. The *Philadelphia Turngemeinde*, which today is considered one of the strongest societies in the Bund, was founded May 15, 1849. Internal dissensions arose, and the dissatisfied members established the *Sociale Turngemeinde* in November of that year. A third society, the *Socialer Turnverein*, was organized at almost the same time. Several months after the gymnastic festival of the Bund, in 1854, these three societies combined to organize the *Socialdemokratische Turngemeinde*.

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A society with a similar name was founded in Baltimore in 1849. Very little is known of the *Socialistischer Turnverein* of Brooklyn, established in 1850 and dissolved during the civil war. On June 6, 1850, the *Socialistischer Turnverein* of New York was founded.

These six societies had barely gained a foothold when they established a *Turnerbund*. The *Socialistischer Turnverein* of New York gave the first impetus to this end in its resolution of July 15, 1850, urging a closer union of all the societies in order to insure their own existence, to protect the common interests and to give a basis for mutual cooperation. A plan of organization presented by the representatives of the New York and Brooklyn societies was accepted, and it was further resolved to invite representatives of all the societies to a convention (*Tagsatzung*), which was finally held in the home of the *Philadelphia Turngemeinde* on the 4th and 5th of October, 1850. Many differences of opinion came to light at this first meeting, particularly on political questions, for one party wished to make the promotion of Socialism\* one of the main functions of the organization. The other faction advocated that the *Turnverein* should confine itself solely to physical training. On one point, however, all were agreed, that the *Turnerbund* should manifest a tendency toward freethought in the broadest sense.

The first year of the gymnastic union did not pass as smoothly as had been hoped. The societies had not come to realize their duties toward the central organization and barely heeded the proclamation of the provisional central executive committee. The *Philadelphia*

\* For a definition of Socialism, as understood by the Turners of that time, see page 46.

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*Turngemeinde* invited all the societies to take part in a general gymnastic festival to be held in that city September 29 and 30, 1851, and the executive committee took advantage of this opportunity to call together a second convention.

The *Turnfest* and the convention proved to be complete successes, according to the first number of the *Turnzeitung*, the official organ of the Bund. At the convention the following societies were represented: New York, Boston, Cincinnati, Brooklyn, Utica, Philadelphia and Newark. The *Indianapolis Turngemeinde*, as well as the *Rochester Turnverein*, had signified their intention of joining the *Turnerbund*. After a heated debate it was finally decided to name the organization *Socialistischer Turnerbund*. The most important resolution was undoubtedly that which called for the establishment of a newspaper which was to be the official organ of the union, and was to be kept free of all personal polemics and of any tendency toward partisanship. The societies were reminded of their duty to maintain the practice of military drill.

When the *Turnerbund* had finally been assured of a permanent organization, the practice of the German system of physical training was gradually taken up by all the large cities in the land. Even in the South, although the Germans were not so numerous as they were farther north in the East and in the West, and although the *Turnerbund* was not in accord with the South on the question of slavery, many gymnastic societies were organized. These societies had become the gathering places for the Germans. Vehement opposition toward these so-called "aliens" was gradually evinced

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by the fanatic party press, and from the pulpit they were scored for their un-Christian conduct and attitude. As a result of this many-sided opposition, the *Turnvereine* gathered strength and gradually gained influence and the respect of fair-minded citizens.

It is characteristic of those days that the revolutionary tendency which had driven these men from their fatherland was still maintained. Political refugees received their support; an agitation was on foot to encourage their erstwhile brothers to renewed revolutionary demonstrations; the resolution by which the societies were urged to continue the practice of arms was prompted by a desire to return to Germany at the first sign of an outbreak, and to take an active part in the uprising of the people.

The *Turnzeitung* of November 15, 1851, showed that 22 societies had been organized in the United States, of which 11 had joined the Turnerbund, and that the total membership of these *Turnvereine* amounted to 1,672. Much space in this paper was devoted to the practice of physical training and to illustrated articles on this subject. The larger societies established turning schools, and the first attempts were made to initiate boys and girls in this new practice.

Physical training bore the stamp of Jahn's time. There were no professional teachers of physical training, and classes were conducted by those best qualified. The gymnastic apparatus was of primitive and awkward construction in comparison with that of to-day.

In the year 1852 two gymnastic festivals were held, one in Baltimore and one in Cincinnati. Thirty societies were represented at the convention held in conjunction



with the *Turnfest* in Cincinnati. A resolution was passed at this meeting by which each gymnastic society was forced to subscribe for as many copies of the *Turnzeitung* as it had members. This resolution later became the bone of bitter contention.

The book on gymnastics which was published in 1853 under the title "Das Turnen," did not meet with the popular success which had been expected for it. It had been written by Eduard Mueller with the hope that it would help the smaller gymnastic societies in the practice of physical training, but it contained so many technicalities of language that it proved of no value to those who were not acquainted with the terms applied to the many physical exercises.

Gymnastic festivals were held in Louisville and in New York in the year 1853, and in September of the same year a convention was called at Cleveland. At this time the *Turnerbund* was divided into five districts, according to locality. An executive committee was placed at the head of each district, and these in turn made their reports to the central organization.

At the convention in Cleveland it had been resolved to urge the establishment of non-sectarian German schools. Many societies sought to realize this ambition and either organized *Schulvereine* (school societies) or lent their financial support to those which were already in existence. Many a German-American school of that time owed its success to the energy and efforts of the *Turnvereine*, which thus honored German traditions.

The otherwise extremely successful *Turnfest* in Philadelphia, 1854, at which calisthenics and apparatus turning by divisions were first introduced, was attended

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with unpleasant disturbances. The town rowdies and loafers gathered at the outskirts of the festival grounds on Lemon Hill, and sought in various ways to disturb the gymnasts. The jeering and hooting grew to such volume that the Turners saw themselves forced to reply with physical violence, whereupon a hand to hand battle ensued in which many were seriously wounded. Eleven of the Turners were indicted by the grand jury, but towards the end of January, 1855, after repeated postponements, the case was finally dropped.

The convention in Pittsburg, September 11 and 12, 1854, is comparatively uninteresting. Although the Bund embraced 62 societies, the report was somewhat unfavorable, particularly as to finances, as these had been woefully mismanaged. It was resolved that not more than one society in any one city could belong to the *Turnerbund*, but that this *Turnverein* could establish branch societies if it so desired. The *Turnzeitung* became the subject of heated debates. It was decided to issue it once a week in larger form and in smaller type in order to make room for a discussion of political questions. Philadelphia was again selected as the executive center. It was decided to give the *Turnfest* in Cincinnati, and Buffalo was chosen for the convention.

The ensuing year was not fraught with many encouraging results. The heated arguments between the North and the South over the slavery question had a depressing influence on the social life of the *Turnvereine*. The *Turnzeitung* ignored its actual purpose, that of furthering and encouraging the practice of physical training, and manifested a lively interest in the burning political questions of the day. And this is only a reflection of

the attitude of the societies themselves, for they lost interest in their gymnastic activities, and devoted themselves to politics.

Members of the Know-Nothing party showed a malicious enmity toward the German citizens, and their frequent attacks finally forced the Turners to resort to arms in self-defence. Especially, in Cincinnati and Columbus was this the case. At a city election in Cincinnati a veritable riot ensued which resulted in blood-shed. At a *Turnfest* in Columbus the city rowdies found occasion to vent their ire on the "white jackets," as the Turners were jeeringly dubbed, and the riot which followed assumed the aspect of a battle. One of the attacking party was killed and nineteen Turners were arrested on the charge of assault with intent to kill. After a successful plea on the part of the lawyer of the defense they were finally acquitted.

By reason of the agitation of the American party against all foreigners and by their own use of the mother tongue, the German element at that time was separated almost entirely from social intercourse with the rest of the population. This increased the range of activities within the Turning societies and everything was done to make the social life there as interesting and as many-sided as possible.

A plan for the establishment of a Turner settlement originated in Cincinnati in March of the year 1855. It was proposed that each settler should buy stock to the extent of fifteen dollars. The total amount thus realized was to be invested in a large plot of land. Upon this a city was to be laid out, and each investor was to be guaranteed a home or a farm. Only members of the

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*Turnerbund* were to be invited to share in this co-operative plan, and at the following convention in Buffalo it was to be decided whether the *Turnerbund* should have permanent charge of this undertaking. As a result the Turner settlement of New Ulm, Minnesota, was founded and its history is of great importance in the annals of the *Turnerbund*.

The convention in Buffalo, 1855, marks a turning-point in the history of the North American Gymnastic Union. By taking a decided stand against slavery, the organization entered into the field of practical politics. The internal dissensions which came to the surface more and more, threatened the unity of the Bund and introduced a spirit of discord among its members.

The platform which was voted on and accepted by the representatives of forty-seven societies after a heated debate embodied the following principles:

"The Turners will vote for no man who is a member of the Know-Nothing party, or who is identified with any Nativistic corporation or party or does not declare himself openly as opposed to any organization of this nature.

"The Turners are opposed to slavery, and regard this institution as unworthy of a republic and not in accord with the principles of freedom.

"The Turners are opposed to all prohibition laws as undemocratic in theory and not feasible in practice."

Towards the last of October, 1855, the newly-elected executive committee took office in Cincinnati. This body was confronted with many difficulties. The treasury was at low ebb. There were many unpaid subscriptions to the *Turnzeitung* and the *Turnerbund* was finally

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forced to overlook the resolution passed in 1852. A dispute which arose over the division of the *Turnerbund* into districts caused further difficulty. The year closed with the *Turnfest* in Cincinnati, where, on account of the finances, no prizes for the literary works submitted could be awarded.

The membership of the Bund was comparatively small in proportion to the total population of the states, but, even though it may prove difficult to produce tangible results, the fact remains that they played a prominent part in the politics of the day. The attitude and the spirited agitation of the Turners induced many of the early German immigrants who had become identified with the Democratic party to change their minds, and to fall in line with the Unionists. The Turners not only manifested the courage of their convictions in debate, in the press and in public discussions, but they braved personal danger for the anti-slavery cause whenever the opportunity presented itself. Such was the case in Boston and Cincinnati when Wendell Phillips, the celebrated abolitionist orator, was defended by the Turners against the furious attacks of hostile mobs; again, in New York, when the Turners responded to a call to police a Fremont demonstration.

The affairs of the Gymnastic Union were not as flourishing as they had been in the past. The practice of gymnastics was gradually neglected, and the interest of the Turners was absorbed by politics. The older Turners began to withdraw entirely from the gymnasiums, and the young men, who otherwise would have filled up the membership of the societies, were not

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available for this purpose, for the immigrants of this time had not the same interest in the ideals of the Turners.

The new executive committee, which met in Cincinnati, was confronted with a large indebtedness, and the organization was threatened with a calamitous future. A number of the southern societies resigned from the Bund because of the newly-adopted anti-slavery paragraph in the platform. The uncompromising attitude of the *Turnzeitung* toward these societies complicated the situation further, and the Bund was split into two parties. The convention, which was to be held in Washington, promised reconciliation, but the executive committee suddenly transferred the meeting to Pittsburg.

The motive which prompted this change became an object of suspicion, and as a result two conventions were held, one in Washington and the other in Pittsburg. Thus the situation became still further complicated. Attempts to reconcile the two factions failed. At the convention in Pittsburg it was resolved to establish a school for gymnastic teachers, trade schools for the members of the Bund, and gymnastic schools for boys and girls. Each of these factions issued a proclamation declaring that they alone deserved recognition as the official gymnastic union.

The year 1856 is of importance, in that it marks one of the most brutal attacks made by the Nativistic rowdies on the Turners. In May of that year, 160 members of the Cincinnati *Turngemeinde*, together with Turners from Newport and Covington, held a gymnastic festival on the Kentucky side of the Ohio river. The disturbances which had begun in the afternoon came to a climax upon the return march of the gymnasts from the festival

grounds, and in the street fights which followed a great number of participants were seriously wounded. The Turners fought their way through the mob and sought refuge in the Newport gymnasium, where they were in a position of defense throughout the night. On the following day 107 Turners were arrested. The bond of each was fixed at \$1,000, the entire sum, \$107,000, being furnished by two citizens of Newport. Later on, after investigation, all were dismissed save nine, who were kept in confinement, and finally, after a long trial, were given their freedom.

Two gymnastic festivals were held in September of the year 1857, the one in Milwaukee and the other in New York, and both were eminently successful.

Repeated attempts at reuniting the two factions of the Bund failed, so in September of the year 1857, the one branch held its convention in Detroit, and the other in Paterson, N. J. The disappointment of the various societies at the utter failure to bring about a reconciliation resulted in the gradual elimination of both factions, as the quarrel had now assumed a personal nature, and dealt with mere formalities rather than with vital principles. This elimination was hastened when the executive committee of Cincinnati issued a proclamation urging the various societies to remove such members who did not declare themselves in entire accord with the platform of the Bund. A great many of the societies ignored this proclamation entirely; some repudiated it, and in many cities it resulted in the founding of independent organizations.

The report of the executive committee of the western faction, which held its convention in Indianapolis in

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September, 1857, showed that 20 societies had been disbanded; that 15 had resigned, and that 13 had joined the union. The treasury was at low ebb and the outlook for the future did not seem promising. Only 13 societies were represented at the convention of the eastern faction, and the report of the executive committee indicated a decrease in membership.

The executive committee of the year 1858, which had its headquarters in Dubuque, made active efforts to put the resolutions of previous conventions into practice. Public speakers were engaged to undertake lecture tours and to direct the interest of the societies into intellectual channels. The larger societies were urged to establish schools for the development of class leaders.

The impetus toward effecting negotiations between the rival factions was given by the executive committee in Washington, and it was finally decided to have a joint session at a gymnastic festival to be held at Baltimore in August, 1859, when the conditions under which the reconciliation could be effected were to be discussed. Representatives of the opposing factions met in Baltimore, and an agreement was drawn up which was to serve as a basis for this consolidation. The final step to reunite the *Turnerbund* was made by the Williamsburg *Turnverein* at an extra session, which was convened in that city November 13, 1859.

The small attendance at the gymnastic festival at St. Louis, 1860, was undoubtedly due to the critical political situation in the country. The coming presidential election promised to be a turning point in the history of the nation. In several proclamations the executive com-



mittee urged the members of the *Turnerbund* to support Lincoln.

The ominous reports which emanated from the South in the midst of the jubilation and the excitement which followed the election of Lincoln, boded ill for the peace of the nation. The Confederate States were mustering their troops in Virginia, and were menacing the national capital. To the northern friends of the rebellion, this appeared as an opportune moment for action. This feeling vented itself in the now famous Baltimore riot, which raged around the Turners of that city. For, after the fall of Fort Sumter, the state flag of Maryland had been hoisted upon all public buildings. The Union flag remained on only one building, the unpretentious hall of the Baltimore *Turnverein*. On April 19th a large mob gathered in front of the building, and under threat of destroying the hall, demanded that the Union flag should be replaced by the state flag. To this the Turners defiantly replied that they would rather blow up their own building than defame it by hoisting the rebel standard.

On April 20, the Turner Hall, though valiantly defended by the Turners, was captured by the rebel mob and every movable bit of property and all the gymnastic apparatus was thrown upon the street. The neighboring office of the official organ of the gymnastic union and the printing establishment of the German paper *Wecker* met a similar fate, both buildings being razed to the ground. Many Turners were forced to flee the city in order to save their lives.

Before the Turners could realize what had happened,

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and before they could entrust the affairs of the Bund to new hands, war was declared and their activity was diverted to the field of battle.

### THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD

Those who were friendly to the cause of the Union welcomed Lincoln's call to arms with enthusiasm, and their sentiment was echoed by the great majority of the German population of the United States. All party differences and private interests were laid aside in order to stamp out the rebellion and to ward off the great danger which threatened to dissolve the nation.

The Turners were among the first to respond to the call to arms and enlist in the Union army. In some regions where the societies were large enough, entire companies were recruited from their ranks, and in New York, St. Louis and Cincinnati regiments were formed, which were almost entirely composed of Turners. Numerous societies had to give up their gymnastic work entirely, and many were dissolved because the majority of their members had taken up the musket. Just as the period preceding the outbreak of the war had been the most inglorious, so these days were perhaps the most glorious in the history of the *Turnerbund*.

The committee report of the Rochester convention showed that the Bund included in the neighborhood of 10,000 members, and it is safe to assume that at least 6,000 of these enlisted in the Union army. But with these, about 2,000 men who had been Turners before the outbreak of the war must be included.

How the spirit and enthusiasm that animated the Turners in these stirring times was manifested in many

ways in all parts of the country, is clearly shown by the incidents that follow.

The Turners in Kansas allied themselves with the Free State party, and stubbornly aided in preventing the pro-slavery party from making the territory a slave state. The Germans gave valuable aid to the Free State faction in their bloody encounters with the Missouri border ruffians in 1855. An interesting incident is reported in the account of the conflict between thirty-five Turners and an equal number of native Americans from Leavenworth, who under Captain Haas, wrested a cannon and other weapons from the ruffians in Kickapoo.

The national capital was not only threatened by an invasion by the Southerners, January, 1861, but was also endangered by the secessionist element within the city. The two *Turnvereine* of Washington organized a company of sharpshooters, composed of eighty-one men, and offered their services to Colonel Stone to aid in defending the city. They also gave valuable service upon the arrival of Lincoln in Washington, and on the day of his inauguration they formed a part of his body-guard during the ceremonies.

In the beginning of January, 1861, the Turners of St. Louis passed a resolution by which the *Turnverein* was dissolved and in its stead a military organization to guard the Union and the cause of freedom was established. It was further resolved to sacrifice life and property, if necessary, to keep the county of St. Louis loyal to the administration in case the state of Missouri should decide to secede. These steps were taken at a time when the magnitude of the danger which threatened the country was barely realized. It was prompted purely

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by patriotism and by the enthusiasm for the cause of freedom. The Secessionists had made every effort to win the Turners over to their side, for they were fully aware of their influence over the rest of the German population; and when they did not succeed in this effort they persecuted the "white jackets" to the limit of endurance. At the time of Lincoln's call to arms three complete and well drilled companies of Turners in St. Louis were ready for immediate service. These were incorporated in the 1st Missouri Regiment and took part in the campaign in southern Missouri. When, at the end of their three months' military service they were dismissed, they joined the 17th Missouri Regiment which was made up almost entirely of Turners and became known as the Western Turner Regiment. They took part in numerous battles and accompanied Sherman on his march to Atlanta.

The Turners of St. Louis were undoubtedly the first to come to the protection of the Union in the hour of danger, and it is due to their influence and that of their German compatriots that the state of Missouri did not secede from the Union. How prompt and effective their action was is shown by the capture of Camp Jackson, May 10, 1861. This act disheartened the Secessionists, and kept the city and county of St. Louis from throwing the weight of their influence to the southern cause.

When the president of the New York *Turnverein* issued a martial proclamation, 1,200 men responded and were enlisted for two years in the service of the Union. Of these, three companies were made up of New York Turners, two from Williamsburg and one from Newark, N. J. The remainder of the regiment was supplied by

the gymnastic societies from Boston, Philadelphia and other cities. Under command of Colonel Max Weber they were sent to Fortress Monroe, Virginia, June 1, 1861, and took part in the capture of Norfolk. As part of the army of the Potomac, the regiment fought in the battles of Savage Station, White Oak Swamp, Malvern Hill, Fredericksburg, South Mountain, Antietam and Salem Heights. On May 10, 1863, the regiment, now numbering only 460 men, returned to New York.

The Turners of Cincinnati were also among the first to take up arms. The men were recruited from the gymnastic societies all over Ohio, and for this reason the regiment was known as the Ohio Turner Regiment. Under the leadership of McCook and Willich, it took part in the siege of Corinth, in the battles of Perryville, Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. This 9th Ohio Regiment, which was composed of 1,135 men, was considered one of the fittest of the Union army, and during its three years' service earned undying fame.

Four hundred men responded to the summons of the Philadelphia *Turngemeinde* for volunteers, and, forming four companies, they placed themselves at the disposal of the governor. Pennsylvania had, however, supplied its share of men before these volunteers could be mustered into service, and so they turned to New York, where they joined the Astor Regiment. A fifth company of Philadelphia Turners traveled to St. Louis where they enlisted in the Western Turner Regiment.

The Turner Union Cadets of Chicago, composed of 105 men, organized themselves on April 17, and were ready to go into battle within four days. A second

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company, organized after the departure of these men, joined the 24th Illinois.

The Milwaukee *Turnverein* organized a battalion of sharpshooters, and their forty members were augmented to 105 by Turners from other Wisconsin societies. In the beginning of May they joined the 5th Wisconsin as Company C, Turner Rifles.

When the Turners of Indianapolis returned at the close of their three months' service, a desire was urgent among them to organize a wholly German regiment, and with the approval of Governor Morton this was accomplished. The regiment was placed under the command of August Willich, and the ten companies were recruited from Indianapolis, Madison, Aurora, Lawrenceburg, Terre Haute, Lafayette, Laporte and Evansville. The regiment, which departed September 6, 1861, for Louisville, was enrolled as the 32d Indiana Regiment, and gained for itself a well-earned reputation in the battles of Rowlett Station, Shiloh, Stone River, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge and on the march to Atlanta.

Although it is practically impossible to determine the exact number, there was hardly a gymnastic society in the Union which was not represented by at least several Turners on the field of battle. In view of the disorganized condition of the *Turnerbund*, no record of the Turners who enlisted in the army was kept, and, consequently, the names of those men who sacrificed their lives in the cause is, to a great extent, unknown.

An account of the civil war period in this limited history of the *Turnerbund* is necessarily brief, but it is well, perhaps, to enumerate the more important regiments which were composed wholly or in part of Turners:

"From Missouri the 1st (Colonel Blair), the 3d (Colonel Franz Sigel), the 12th (Colonel Osterhaus), the 17th (Colonel Hassendeubel, later Colonel Kramer), and the 41st (Colonel Wiedemeyer); from Wisconsin the 5th, the 9th (Colonel Salomon), the 26th (Colonel Hans Böbel); from Ohio the 9th (Colonel McCook), the 28th (Colonel Moor), the 37th (Colonel Siebert), the 106th (Colonel G. Tafel), the 108th (Colonel Limberg); from Illinois the 9th (Colonel Mersy), the 24th (Colonel Frederick Hecker), the 43d (Colonel Engelmann), the 82d (Colonel Frederick Hecker); the 1st and 2d of Kentucky; the 47th of Pennsylvania; the 20th of New York (Colonel Max Weber, later Colonel Engelbert Schnepf); the 2d Cavalry Regiment of Minnesota (Lieutenant-Colonel Pfänder); the Artillery Brigade of Ohio (Colonel Max Hoffmann), and the Artillery Brigade of Minnesota (Colonel Wm. Pfänder\*)." x

During the early part of the war many unsuccessful attempts were made to infuse new life into the *Turnerbund*. The Turner societies of New York, which had been strengthened by numerous immigrants, formed a close alliance in February, 1863, and when they had gained a firm foothold they made an attempt to call the *Turnerbund* back into life. A general gymnastic festival, to which the societies from all over the country were invited, was determined on as the best means to effect this end.

Over 800 visiting Turners took part in the festival, September, 1864, and every one of these evinced a desire for the reorganization of the Bund, and at the convention which was held at this time it was decided to retain the platform of the old Bund, and to give the title of *Amerikanischer Turnerbund* to the new organization.

\*H. Huhn, Turner Almanac, 1890.

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A proclamation was issued by the central committee to the gymnastic societies of America calling upon them to group themselves into districts and to join the new *Turnerbund*. This met with general approval, and the beginning, made by Cincinnati with five societies, was rapidly followed by the districts of New England, West New York, St. Louis, Connecticut and Wisconsin.

The convention in Washington, April 3, 1865, is of primary importance in the history of the North American Gymnastic Union, for at this meeting the unfortunate period of factional strife was terminated, and the cause of German gymnastics was taken up with renewed vigor. The friendly spirit shown by all the delegates contributed greatly toward the amicable readjustment of affairs, which furthered the revival of the Bund. The general enthusiasm, however, can no doubt be attributed to another cause which aroused great rejoicing at this memorable meeting.

Dispatches telling of the glorious victories of the Union arms, which culminated in the capture of Richmond and promised the total suppression of the rebellion in the near future, arrived in Washington during the session of the Turner delegates, and were received with unabated enthusiasm. The city became a scene of joyous festivities, into which the organizers of the new Bund entered with great enthusiasm, and the spirit of the occasion manifested itself within the convention hall. They had good reason to rejoice, for the defeat of the Confederacy, with its great national significance, came simultaneously with the formation of the vigorous, reunited *Turnerbund*.



THE TURNERBUND AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

The gymnastic societies, which had managed to exist through the turmoil of the civil war, flourished rapidly after the Washington convention of the re-united *Turnerbund*. It was, indeed, a period of enthusiastic activity. Upon returning from the field of battle, the Turners resumed the work in their societies, which had been neglected for such a long time, with renewed vigor and interest, and they found new and valuable allies in the numerous German immigrants of that day who had received a thorough gymnastic training in the mother country. The New York executive committee did everything in its power to encourage the work of rejuvenating and strengthening the *Turnerbund*. It planned the establishment of a normal school for the training of teachers of gymnastics in order to supply the societies and schools with competent men who had enjoyed the benefit of a complete theoretic and practical study of gymnastics. It may be of interest to note that at the *Turnfest* in Cincinnati, in September, 1865, a national meeting of the teachers of physical training, the first of its kind in the history of German-American gymnastics, was convened in that city. Furthermore, an effort was made to gain the interest of prominent educators and their co-operation in the publication of a series of non-sectarian German school books to be used by the societies and German academies. The ultimate ambition was to introduce the teaching of German into the public schools of the country. The Turner societies evinced a decided interest in all intellectual questions, and prominent lecturers were engaged to address their members.

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Aside from matters concerning gymnastics and other educational questions, the solution of the political problems of that time was foremost in the minds of the Turners. In their national convention in St. Louis, 1866, the following resolutions were adopted and forwarded to the United States congress:

(1) "The constitution of the United States provides that congress shall make all those laws and provisions necessary for the general welfare of the nation; therefore, it should be its duty to pass such laws as will insure the future, and shall enforce those republican provisions of the constitution which will extend to every citizen of the United States his rights as such in each state of the Union.

(2) "The constitution shall be amended in such a form that the cardinal principles of the Declaration of Independence will have a legal status.

(3) "The convention advises the Turners and all friends of freedom to be alert and manifest an active interest in all public questions, so that congress may realize that it will be supported by a loyal body of citizens only when it makes an honest effort to smother the national turmoil by instituting energetic provisions to eradicate certain existing evils."

The New York district added the following:

"It shall further be the duty of this organization to support all attempts to raise the intellectual standard of the people, and to promote a non-sectarian education of the youth by establishing and furthering good schools."

It is significant to note that the manifesto was issued at a time when the promise of the civil war for a true democracy was in imminent peril, and this, as the Turners

stated in the preamble to their resolution, was due to the fact that President Andrew Johnson did not redeem his promises and was sacrificing the interests of the country.

In 1867 the effort was made by the executive committee to form an independent progressive party. Although the attempt failed because the Turners were unwilling to divert their activities into partisan political channels, the movement retains an historical interest. The leading spirits of this proposed organization felt that a true democratic republic could be attained only when the demands of their platform were carried into execution.

The most significant paragraphs of this platform call for the impartial administration of justice without discrimination as to race, color or nationality; for the protection of life and property; for an enumeration of the uniform legal qualifications for voters in the national elections; for a general and uniform distribution of taxes and the maintenance of the principle of a progressive capital and income tax. The platform also demanded that free entry should be given all raw products which could be produced only in insufficient quantity within the United States; that better national support should be given to the department of education; that its work should be extended farther, particularly in the South; that compulsory school education be introduced as a necessary guarantee against the misuse of the voting privilege; that all monopolies should be restricted and that the employee should be protected against the unjust demands of his employer. Furthermore, a national standing army was advocated on the basis of compulsory military service; laws protecting and encouraging desirable immigration were urged, and, in conclusion,

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the Turners advocated the abolishment of the existing presidential system, declaring it to be an unrepblican institution, and advised in its stead a national executive committee, to be elected by congress, and the separation of the military authority from all political power as more expedient and more in harmony with the spirit of the time.

At that time the *Turnerbund* was composed of 18 districts and 148 societies, with a total membership of 10,200.

In 1871 the executive committee published a manifesto addressed to the people of the United States, in which the attitude of the Turners toward the public questions of the day was defined at length. It is hardly necessary to enumerate the specific clauses of this manifesto, since the political policy advocated by the Turners has been set forth in the above account of the platform of the free progressive party. However, one paragraph dealing with socialism as it was understood by the Turners at that time, is of special interest. The manifesto makes the following statement:

"Socialism of to-day, in which we Turners believe, aims to remove the pernicious antagonism between labor and capital. It endeavors to effect a reconciliation between these two, and to establish a peace by which the rights of the former are fully protected against the encroachments of the latter.

"In short, socialism wishes to actuate business honesty. There is no doubt that the next European revolution will primarily exhibit a social character, and it is difficult to foresee the outcome. However, since self-preservation is the inherent impulse of the human race, the ultimate solution of this vital problem will be in the

final victory of the oppressed classes. They, in their turn, must not violate justice in their demands. They must not endeavor to build up some sort of a new aristocracy of the working class upon the ruins of the old aristocratic class, with its manifold privileges and numerous monopolies and its unwarrantable advantages—a heritage bestowed by the blind accident of birth.

"We wish all men to be working men, sustaining themselves by the product of their labor, but by no means do we favor the creation of new class distinctions upon the overthrow of the present controlling class."

It will be observed that a great number of the reforms advocated by the Turners in their manifestos some forty odd years ago anticipated the political questions which have come to the foreground at the present day.\* The question of universal suffrage, which is the basis for much feverish discussion in our age, was propounded to the American people by the Turners in October of the year 1871. It was urged that men and women should have an equal status in the political life of the nation, and that the power of the ballot should also be conferred upon the latter. This clause, which caused great excitement in numerous gymnastic societies and led to heated debates, was finally withdrawn at the Louisville convention in the following May.

It is but natural that the momentous crisis of the civil war, and the serious problems of reconstruction with which the nation was confronted at the conclusion of that terrible struggle, should leave a deep impression upon the minds of the "Forty-eighters," as the political refugees of the German revolution of 1848 were called. On the other hand, the Americans learned to appreciate

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\*The Turner Convention at Denver, 1894, recommended the establishment of Postal Savings Banks.

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the noble spirit of self-sacrifice which the Germans had shown in the dark days of the civil war. Intercourse between the men of these two great races became more frequent day by day in business, social and political ways. Gradually the conviction dawned upon both that the one could learn a great deal from the other, and unconsciously, in the meanwhile, the Germans became more and more Americanized.

However, the chief factor in this process of transformation, which manifested its slow but irresistible progress in all the German clubs and societies, was the maturing youth. The revolutionary spirit of the "Forty-eighters" which inspired the fathers, was strange and incomprehensible to their children who had grown up in other surroundings, and had been imbued with different thoughts and feelings. The English language, which came so much easier to this new generation, attained precedence at all the social gatherings and entertainments, although the official language continued to be German at all formal meetings of the Turners.

Again, it became evident that the Turners of America had but little in common with the Turners of Germany, as was boldly pointed out in the annual report of the executive committee of 1872.

"The Turners of America have nothing in common with the Turners of the old fatherland, except the system of physical training," says the report, and then proceeds: "Of our endeavors for reform in the political, religious and social fields, of the struggle against corruption and slavery in all forms, the Turners in Germany know nothing, although this has been the object and the inspiration of our gymnastic union."

The Turners of Germany had ceased to participate, as an organization, in the attempts to solve the political problems of their country, and confined their activities solely to the practice of physical training. On the other hand, the American Turners continued to be as actively interested in the vital questions of the day after the civil war as they had been in the past. In order to emphasize the different sphere of the *Turnerbund*, the executive committee made the following statement in this report: "Our *Turnerbund* might be regarded as a mere branch of the German *Turnerbund*. But, on the contrary, the American *Turnerbund*, as it is organized to-day, with its platform and its constitution, its hopes and endeavors, is pre-eminently American."

The Chicago executive committee, which made the statement quoted above, further urged the various societies to awaken an interest in the *Turnerbund* in the native Americans, and to popularize the practice of physical training through their influence.

At the national convention of the *Turnerbund* at Cleveland in 1878, a series of resolutions embodying the principles of the Turners was adopted. They advocated the right of recall, the initiative and referendum for all important laws, the abolishment of all complicated representation of the people, and declared the artificial distribution of power, as, for instance, the election of senators by the state legislatures, to be a pernicious obstacle to true democracy.

As a proper solution for certain social problems as a means for the betterment of social conditions, the Turners recommended laws for the protection of labor against capital; for the inspection of factories, food and lodgings

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as a sanitary safeguard, and for the restriction of child labor in factories. The abolishment of the senate and the presidency in their present form was recommended on the ground that these were identical with certain monarchical institutions. The cessation of the practice of donating or selling public land to private individuals and corporations was also advocated in this declaration.

Many of the more conservative members of the *Turnerbund* were opposed to this declaration of principles as drawn up by the Cleveland convention, but it was adopted by a referendum vote. Some years later the paragraph dealing with the senate and the presidency was stricken from the declaration by a primary vote. In its stead the election of senators by popular vote was proposed.

At the convention held at Indianapolis in 1880, Dr. H. M. Starkloff of St. Louis, the first speaker of the executive committee, made the following remarks in his opening address:

"We have gained that personal liberty the German Turners once dreamed of; we have done our duty in that direction. That part of our program is fulfilled, and it remains for us to find a new field for our energies. How would it be if we would work with all our might to introduce physical training into the public schools of this country? We could not conceive a more beautiful gift than this to bestow upon the American people. It seems to me that this should be a worthy enterprise, for whosoever has conquered the youth has gained the future."

In 1881 a select group of German-American Turners from Milwaukee, under the leadership of George Brosius, at that time the director of The Normal School of the



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*Turnerbund*, crossed the Atlantic as the first team to attend and compete in a gymnastic festival in Germany. The festival was held in Frankfort on the Main, and, upon their return to this country, the American Turners brought back with them the 2nd, 3d, 5th, 6th, 13th and 21st competitive prizes.

As the years passed by the Turners devoted their energies less to the political and more to the educational side of their program. The history of the *Turnerbund* now consists chiefly of an account of the various gymnastic festivals and conventions which, though eminently successful, are of particular interest only to those who are intimately identified with the organization.

The national festivals, which in former years had been held annually, grew too expensive as the membership of the gymnastic union increased. The financial risk assumed by the society, under whose auspices the festival was held, became too large. For that reason, since 1885, these gymnastic festivals have been held only once every four years. Up to that time the societies had been represented by the picked men of their organization and the total number of active competitors at such festivals ranged from 200 to 300 men. However, when competitive gymnastics between the societies were introduced the total number of active Turners who competed ran into thousands. At the national *Turnfest* in Cincinnati (1889) 1,179 Turners competed; in Milwaukee (1893) 3,380; in St. Louis (1897) 2,600; in Philadelphia (1900) at the golden jubilee of the *Turnerbund* 1,650; in Indianapolis (1905) 1,400, and in Cincinnati (1910) 1,800. At St. Louis, in 1897, school children were invited for the first time to participate in a *Turnfest*. Since then mass drills

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by the children have always been an interesting feature of the festivals. The next national festival will be held at Denver, Colorado, in 1913.

In the year 1904 the *Turnerbund* was represented by a class of eight men under the leadership of Henry Suder, director of physical training in the Chicago public schools, at the *Turnfest* in Nuremberg, Germany. They proved to be no mean rivals of their German brethren in the art of physical training. The next year at Indianapolis, for the first time in the history of the gymnastic union, a class of German Turners, under the leadership of Professor F. Kessler, of Stuttgart, attended a *Turnfest* in this country. The gymnastic union of Germany comprises a total membership of 750,000 men, from which number the best nine Turners were selected to represent their organization on American soil. It is not surprising, therefore, that these Turners took home with them the highest competitive prizes that were awarded at the festival. The rare skill and the finish of all their apparatus work and their versatility in the various gymnastic exercises amazed the spectators and caused general comment. Mr. Charles W. Fairbanks, then Vice-President of United States, witnessed the gymnastic exercises of the German Turners and bade them, in the name of the nation, a hearty welcome to this country. After a brief visit to the larger cities of the middle West the German Turners returned to Europe, highly elated at the friendly reception that had been accorded them.

In 1908 the *Turnerbund* arranged an excursion to the German gymnastic festival in Frankfort on the Main. Under the leadership of George Brosius, the oldest and most deserving teacher in the Bund, a class of ninety

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American Turners was accorded great applause for a meritorious exhibition of dumb-bell exercises. The American Turners also gave an exhibition of base-ball, and our national game aroused unwonted interest among the German spectators. From 500 to 600 members of the North American Gymnastic Union marched in the festival parade and were applauded by the enthusiastic citizens of Frankfort and their guests, who showered the American visitors with flowers and wreaths.

From the very beginning the societies of the North American Gymnastic Union have endeavored to extend the practice of physical training to all without discrimination as to age or sex. The boy, the youth, the man, the girl, the woman, even the father and mother, are not merely tolerated, but are urged to participate in the gymnastic work of the society. In consequence, the influence of the gymnastic union has increased steadily from year to year. According to the statistics, compiled January 1st, 1911, the North American Gymnastic Union is composed of 24 districts with 232 societies and a membership of 38,751.

The enrollment in the various gymnasium classes is as follows:

5298 Seniors  
3645 Juniors  
2225 Business Men  
4800 Women  
10,755 Boys  
7665 Girls

The fencing sections enroll 326, singing sections 2061, dramatic sections 546, and women's sections 6155.

Some of the gymnastic societies also maintain elementary schools, freehand and mechanical drawing schools,

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schools for the study of German, and girls' industrial schools.

The headquarters of the *Turnerbund* were removed from St. Louis to Indianapolis in 1898 and the executive committee has been located in that city since that time.

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### THE INFLUENCE OF THE NORTH AMERICAN TURNERBUND ON GYMNASTICS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. Edward Mussey Hartwell, in his admirable report to the United States Commissioner of Education, 1897-98, in the chapter on Physical Education, speaking of gymnastics in the city schools in the United States says: "Neither the colleges nor the athletic organizations of the country have earned the right to speak with authority on the question of what constitutes a well-ordered and practicable system of physical training for elementary and secondary schools. Therefore, the more or less successful introduction of school gymnastics, since 1884, by the cities of Chicago, Kansas City, Cleveland, Denver, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, St. Paul, San Francisco, and Boston, through the action of their respective school boards, has been chiefly due to the zeal and insistence of the advocates of the German and Swedish systems of gymnastics, who were prepared to speak with knowledge and to act with intelligence. In every city named above, excepting Boston, German free and light gymnastics have been adopted, and the directors of physical education are graduates of the Seminary or

Normal School of the North American *Turnerbund*. In Boston, Worcester, Cambridge, and a considerable number of other cities in Massachusetts and New England, Swedish gymnastics have been introduced more or less completely into the public schools. Mixed systems of an eclectic character are in vogue in the schools of Brooklyn, Washington, New York, and Providence. The promotion of gymnastic teaching in the public schools has ever been one of the cherished aims of the *Turnerbund*."

While the Turner societies were primarily organized for physical and mental education of adults, the maintenance of schools of gymnastics for boys and girls was made obligatory for all societies of the Bund, until such time when the public schools should give adequate physical training to their pupils. Whenever, therefore, a favorable opportunity presented itself, boards of education were petitioned to introduce gymnastics. The Turner societies were always ready to co-operate with school boards, and in many cities the teachers and leaders of these societies taught gratuitously (often for years) in order to let results convince skeptical school boards of the value of school gymnastics.

Although introduced into the school systems of some of the cities of the middle western states in the sixties and seventies (in Cincinnati as early as 1860) gymnastics never became an integral part of the school work for any great length of time. In fact, Dr. Hartwell states in his report "that even now (1898) no important city or town of the United States has succeeded in maintaining for fifteen successive years a genuine and adequate system of school gymnastics."

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It is, therefore, with some measure of pride, that we are able to report that practically all the cities Dr. Hartwell refers to are at present, thirteen years later, not only successfully conducting free exercises in their schools, but have adopted the policy of installing in all school buildings gymnasiums, or playrooms, and of equipping the schoolyards as open-air gymnasiums or playgrounds.

The successful introduction of physical training into the public schools naturally had its influence upon private and parochial schools, and even upon some colleges and universities with the result that these also made gymnastics part of their regular work.

But there is another part of physical education which owes much of its success to the early efforts of the Turners. We refer to the play movement. Play ever was an integral part of *Turnen*, of gymnastics. Guts Muths', as well as Jahn's gymnastics, were conducted in the open. The activities upon these grounds were mainly games and what is now grouped under the name of track and field work. Exercises upon apparatus were added later, as being essential for winter and for indoor work. As early as the late sixties boys and girls in Cincinnati enjoyed the giant stride and swings in the large playground or garden, as it was then called, back of the old Turner Hall, and did stunts upon the horizontal bars, jumped and vaulted into jumping pits filled with tan-bark, threw the javelin and played ball. And, as in Cincinnati, so it was in other cities. It was, therefore, perfectly natural when the modern playground movement swept over Europe and over the United States that the *Turnerbund* was again to be found in the foreground as one of its most ardent and intelligent advocates, and that the Bund's

teachers and leaders were again willing to co-operate in organizing and supervising playgrounds.

A recent questionnaire sent to cities where there are Turner societies shows that gymnastics were introduced into the schools of fifty-two cities either by the direct efforts of the Turner societies of these cities or through the efforts of the district organizations. These cities in the year 1910 had a population of 16,083,400, and a school population of 2,085,763.\* The physical training work in these cities is supervised by 352 teachers.

The time devoted daily to gymnastics averages fifteen minutes in primary and grammar grades, and two weekly periods of forty-five minutes each in the high schools. While the work is obligatory for practically all elementary grades, only about one third of the cities have gymnastics obligatory for all four high school years; two years seem to be the rule.

The questionnaire showed that recent years have brought about several marked developments in the physical training work of the public schools. The first is the installation of gymnasiums in the buildings devoted to elementary education (the high schools in most cities have long since had gymnasiums). Forty-one cities report that they are beginning to equip their schools with gymnasiums; the total number of gymnasiums is 323. Chicago reports that it has 70 gymnasiums in its schools, while St. Louis reports 37 and Cincinnati 28. Quite a number state that all new buildings are being equipped with gymnasiums or playrooms.

The second development is the building of shower baths and even of swimming pools in the elementary

\* These figures, as well as all others, apply only to cities in which it was reasonably certain that gymnastics were introduced through the efforts of the *Turnerbund*.

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schools. The third is the equipping of playrooms for indoor play. The greatest forward step, however, is the recognition that the yard of every school is the natural playground for most of the children attending the school. This brought with it the enlargement of school yards and the equipment of the same with gymnastic and play apparatus. Thirty-three cities report that their school grounds are being equipped. The total number of equipped schoolyards is 537. Indianapolis reports that all of her 61 schools have equipped yards. Philadelphia reports 58 and Kansas City 40; and quite a number of smaller cities report that practically all of their schoolyards (numbering from 10 to 25) are equipped. It is interesting and encouraging to note that although this wider use of the schoolyards is of more recent origin, and has been introduced in fewer cities as yet, the number of equipped school yards or playgrounds is already greater than the number of equipped gymnasiums and playrooms, i. e. 41 cities with 323 gymnasiums as against 33 cities with 537 playgrounds.

Summarizing, the results of this investigation show that the *Turnerbund* has been and still is an active and efficient agent promoting rational physical training in the schools of the United States.





## HISTORY OF THE NORMAL COLLEGE OF THE NORTH AMERICAN GYM- NASTIC UNION

The Normal College of the North American Gymnastic Union is the oldest American institution for the education of teachers of physical training.

The Normal School of the North American Gymnastic Union was reorganized in 1866. Prior to 1875, the school was a traveling institute of gymnastics, whose earliest courses were completed in the city of New York. The institute was then transferred to Chicago. In October, 1871, the great fire in Chicago ended the existence of the institute in that city, and in 1872 the school was reopened in the city of New York.

From 1875 to 1888, Milwaukee was the seat of the Normal School. From 1889 to 1891, the school temporarily made its home in the city of Indianapolis. At the end of this transitional period, the North American Gymnastic Union had completed a gymnasium building adjoining the new home of the National German-American Teachers' Seminary and the German and English Academy at Milwaukee. The three schools were united in a way that enabled each to preserve its individuality, and at the same time to utilize the teaching facilities of the other two schools.

In 1902, the scope of the work of the Normal School was materially extended. From 1902 to 1907, the following courses were given: *Course A.* A special course for the students of the National German-American Teachers' Seminary.—*Course B.* A one-year course for male students of the Normal School who had attained the

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knowledge of German required for admission to the first-year class of the Teachers' Seminary, but did not meet the entrance requirements for course C.—*Course C.* 1902–1904: A one year course for students of the Normal School who had attained the knowledge of English required for admission to the second-year class of the Teachers' Seminary. 1904–1907: A one-year course for students of the Normal School who held an American high school diploma or had passed equivalent entrance examinations.—*Course D.* A one-year course for students of the Normal School who, in addition to the qualifications prescribed for course C, had a thorough knowledge of the German language.

At a joint meeting of the governing boards of the three schools, held September 29, 1906, it was agreed that after August 31, 1907, the National German-American Teachers' Seminary and the Normal School of Gymnastics should be conducted as separate and independent institutions. At the same meeting, the gymnasium building was sold to the German and English Academy.

In January, 1907, the National Executive Committee of the North American Gymnastic Union adopted resolutions to the effect that after August 31, 1907, the Normal School of Gymnastics be conducted in the city of Indianapolis under the name of "The Normal College of the North American Gymnastic Union"; that one-year, two-year, and four-year college courses be offered prospective teachers of physical training who, prior to matriculation, completed the four-year course of an approved American high school, or who pass equivalent entrance examinations in high school subjects, including at least three years of high school English; and that in addition

to physical training and practice in teaching, the work of each college year includes courses in letters and science equivalent to one year's work as counted by universities toward the baccalaureate degree.

In March, 1907, the Normal College was incorporated under the laws of the State of Indiana as an institution of learning empowered to confer academic titles and degrees. In June, 1910, the College was accredited in Class A by the Indiana State Board of Education, which exempts applicants for positions in the Public and High Schools of Indiana from examination.

The Normal College was opened in the German House at Indianapolis on September 23, 1907.

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## CONCLUSION

It is not presumptuous to remark that in the sixty-one years of its existence the *Turnerbund* has been an important factor in the cultural development of this republic. From the very inception of their organization, in whatever principles they have advocated, it has always been the serious aim of the Turners to contribute their share toward the fruitful development of the country. To be sure, these men may not always have been on the right track. In their eager desire for reform they may have overshot the mark at times, but every unprejudiced historian will agree that as citizens of this country they have been honest and unselfish in their activities. They were never diverted from their goal by harsh criticism or by

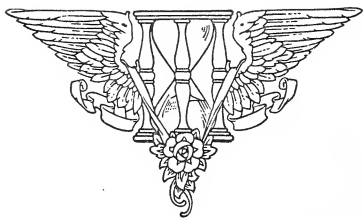
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the superior smiles of those who claimed to know better,  
for they have kept in mind the spirit of Goethe's words:

*"Wer fertig ist, dem ist nichts recht zu machen;  
Ein Werdender wird immer dankbar sein!"*

"A mind, once formed, is never suited after.  
One, yet in growth, will ever grateful be."



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